

2 ✓ N^o 5
KINGS *and* JUDGES

THE

Vicegerents of G O D.

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd *July* 31, 1729.

AT THE

A S S I Z E S

Holden at *Kingston* upon *Thames* in the County of *Surrey*,

Before the RIGHT HONOURABLE

The Lord Chief Justice *ETRE.*

By *RICHARD COLEIRE*, M. A.

Minister of *Richmond* in *Surrey*; Vicar of *Isleworth* in *Middlesex*;
and late Fellow of *All-Souls* College in *Oxford*.

*Publiſh'd at the Request of the HIGH SHERIFF, and the
Gentlemen of the Grand-Jury.*

L O N D O N: Ⓜ

Printed for J. PEMBERTON, at the *Buck*, over-against
St. Dunſtan's Church, in *Fleet-street*. M.DCC.XXIX.

To the Honorable

MATTHEW DICKER BAR.

High Sheriff of the County of Surrey

And to the Right Honorable

His Lordship the Lord Palmerston;

My Lord, I have the honor to

acknowledge the receipt of your

letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the subject of

the petition of the

County of Surrey

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To the Honourable
Sir MATTHEW DECKER *Bar^t.*
High-Sheriff of the County of *Surrey*;

And to the Right Honourable
HENRY *Lord Viscount* Palmerston;

Henry Vincent Esq;
Edmond Halsey Esq;
Micajah Perry Esq;
George Ballard Esq;
Nathaniel Roffey Esq
Peter Cock Esq;
William Welch Esq;
John Palmer Esq;
Samuel Whincopp Esq;
Thomas Hucks Esq;
James Clarke Esq;

James Creed Esq;
James Theobald Esq,
Edward Lovibond Esq;
Maltis Ryall Esq;
James Cooke Esq;
Robert Austen Esq;
Percival Lewis Esq;
John Copeland Gent.
Richard Hawes Gent.
George Pottinger Gent.
John Bishopp Gent.

GENTLEMEN,

I Had the Honour of your *United Com-*
mands that I should publish this Discourse.
I will not offend any of you so far, as to apo-
logize for a Performance which you have
more than excus'd. I assure you that I com-
pos'd it with an *Honest Intention*, and treated
the *Important Subject* as well as I was able :
and if there be any thing in the Discourse itself
which recommended it to your Acceptance,

DEDICATION.

it is the Endeavour, which will appear throughout it, to make it serviceable both to KING and COUNTRY.

I need not draw *Characters* upon this Occasion, for, *Gentlemen*, you are well known by your steady Adherence to Both. This Assize wou'd not have been distinguish'd by *Guests* of the *First Rank* in the State, but that they knew *whom* they were to *Honour* by Their *Appearance* at it: and a Grand-Jury of Our County must surely be very *Eminent*, when there was a Contention not to be *excus'd*, but, to be *brought upon* the Panel.

With relation to myself, give me leave to acknowledge, that This Publication was the Result of your *Complaisance* to each other. For the *Grand Jury*, out of Regard to their *Obliging High-Sheriff*, whose *Merits* had captivated *them*, as they do *all that know him*, complimented his Preacher with their *Vote*, that he shou'd print his Sermon; and the *High-Sheriff* return'd his Respects to a most *Valuable Grand Jury*, by agreeing (*in his ever courteous and engaging manner*) to their Proposal.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your most Obliged, and most
Devoted Humble Servant,
RICHARD COLEIRE.

KINGS and JUDGES

THE

Vicegerents of G O D.

PSALM 82. I.

*God standeth in the Congregation of
the Mighty: He judgeth among
the Gods.*

AS *God* intimates his relation to Magistrates in the words of my Text, and asserts it in the 6th Verse of this Psalm, *I have said ye are Gods, and all of you are Children of the Most High*; so, in acknowledgement that *God* is their *Almighty Principal*, our *Kings* are invested with the *Royalties* and *Cares* of Government in his *holy Courts*; and our *Judges* consecrate their *Circuits*, by *worshipping in the House of God*, before they enter upon the Administration of *Justice and Judgement*.

Were not the *Eminence* of their *Stations* ballanc'd by the *Weightiness* of their *Charge*, they might be tempted, like *St. Paul*, to be *exalted above measure*, as ² Cor. 12. 7. much as, by their high *Place* and *Calling*, they are *exalted above other Men*: But as it is *God's design* that they

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Rom. 13. 4. should be *his Ministers for good*; as it is the *Expectation* of the People committed to their Charge, that *under them*
 1 Tim. 2. 2. *they may lead quiet and peaceable Lives*, and be secur'd in every *valuable Privilege* which arises from good Government; therefore they are credited by God with Titles almost *Divine*, because their Work is, in a manner, *Providential*, as they are the *Vicegerents of Heaven* in the *Conservation of Publick Welfare*.

For this end it is necessary, not only that they should
 Ps. 78. 73. have *faithful and true Hearts*, which according to the
 Epictetus. Philosopher's Sentiment, are Qualifications in *their own Power*; but that they should be endued with that *free*,
 Ps. 51. 12. that *discerning Spirit* for which *David* and *Solomon*
 1 Kin. 3. 9. *prayed*, to carry them through all the *Difficulties* of *Ruling well*, and to find out the *various Intricacies* which perplex the *Cause and Judgement*. For this end, *God standeth in their Congregation*, and *judgeth among them*, that he may *preserve the Fences of their Discipline*, and give *Sanction to their Laws*: that he may *vindicate them in their just but wary Exercise of the Power*
 Rom. 13. 4. *of the Sword*; and *maintain them in those Rights and Regards* which make their *Offices sacred*, and engage us to the *Duty of Children*, because *they have the Care of Fathers*.

And, in *Reason* it is fitting, as well as by the *Order of Providence*, that since Government is the *very Instrument* of *Publick Happiness*, and our Rulers are armed with *Power for our sakes* more than *their own*; we should *honour those who are set over us*, *revere their Authority*, and *esteem them highly in love*, for the *Blessings* which *they secure to us*! It is *suitable* that we should *hear, and confess*, our *Obligations to be thankful* for the *Cares of Government*, when our *Judges go through*
 the

the Land, to see and to determine; to loose the Bands of Wickedness, to undo the heavy Burdens, to let the Oppressed go free, and to break every Yoke. Never, sure, can Submission to Magistrates more seasonably be enforced, than when *They* and *We* meet together in the Presence of God: *They* to acknowledge (for they need not be admonish'd) that they judge not for Man but for the Lord; and *We* to consent, that, under the Protection of Government, the Duty of Obedience is but the Debt of Gratitude!

This, in truth, is the inspir'd Purport of the whole Psalm before us. And altho' it was compos'd upon a contrary Supposition, that Princes might strain their Commission, and Judges might neglect their Charge; yet, when the Throne and the Bench are adorn'd with respective Magistrates, who Rule, and do Justice, prudently, with all their Power; as the People are happy who are in such a case, so their Rulers are earthly Gods, and have the Lord for their God.

God standeth in the Congregation of the Mighty, he judgeth among the Gods.

In speaking to these words upon this Occasion, I shall beg leave to consider,

- I. The Titles here given to Kings and Judges, and the Reason for which they are dignified with such high Characters.
- II. The Assistance and Defence with which they are supported, in their attendance upon the Trust committed to their Charge.
- III. The Returns which Religion and Gratitude prescribe, for the Benefits flowing from their Administration.

I. Then let us consider the Titles here given to Kings and Judges, and the Reason for which they are dignified with such high Characters.

Should I speak only to the *Divine Titles* with which they are dignified, without setting forth the Reasons for which they are *called Gods*, the Doctrine being *unsound*, could not but be *unacceptable*; as it would be to *no purpose*, because their Office *needs it not*. But when the Psalmist makes the Argument both *temperate* and *serious*, and, joining their *Dignity* and their *Trust* together, declares that *as they are Gods*, they are *expected* to be *godlike Men*; *good-luck have they with their Honour*, there is *no Envy* in asserting it; for they stand, *greatly*, in need of the Apostle's Caution, *Be not high-minded, but fear*.

Ps. 45. 4.

Rom. II.
20.

Now the Names by which *Kings* and *Judges* have the *Scriptural Title of Gods* are **Elîm*, the *Mighty*, and † *Elohîm*, the *Gods*. *Elîm* furnishes us with no other Conception, than that as God is *mighty in himself*, he invests *those Persons* with *proper Might* or *Power* who *represent him* upon Earth: but *Elohîm* being a word of most instructive sense, and comprehending a Duty *proportion'd* to the *Name*; I shall endeavour to explain it, and to apply the Instruction, which the *Name dictates*, and the *Character is charg'd with*.

Gen. I. 1.

Elohîm is God's Name in the *Chapter of the Creation*, and of consequence, the *first Name* by which he stands *reveal'd*. It is deriv'd from ‡ *Ala*, which signifies *he swore*; and being of the *plural Number* is construed *Conjuratores*, which signifies *Persons swearing*, or *consecrating together by Oath*.

From

אלם *

אלהים †

אלה ‡

the Vicegerents of G O D.

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From this Name we may safely collect, that the First Representation which God gave us of *himself*, was under the *Confederation* of the *Blessed Trinity*. And as this Confederation is convey'd to us by the *Idea of Swearing*, it intimates that the *Three Persons in the Godhead* had bound themselves by an Oath, to perform all Things comprehended in the *Notion* of an *Almighty Sovereign*; all that *Right* in every kind, of *Providence, Justice, Judgement, Mercy*; which cou'd be expected from the *Judge of all the Earth*.

Gen. 18.25.

For this Reason it is (for *therefore* I have produced the Criticism upon *This Name of God*) that, as *Elohim* originally signifies the *Sworn Persons*, and imports the *Divine Confederacy* for the *Creation, Preservation* and *Redemption* of Mankind; so, as God is pleased to *Communicate This Name to Kings and Judges*, it is under the *same Idea, still*, that they are *sworn Persons*! *Sworn*, as they bear *his Character* that they will do *his Work*; that they will *minister true Justice and Judgement in his stead*; and perform *Every Thing* with-
in Their *Skill or Power*, which the People whom they Rule or Judge may be the *Better for*.

Psal. 9. 8.

St. Paul tells the *Hebrews*, that *Men verily swear by the Greater, but God because he cou'd swear by no Greater, swears by himself*. Our *earthly Elohim*, then, our *Kings and Judges*, are under the *Obligation* of a most *sacred Oath*. *They too*, as well as the People that are under them, are bound by *Wrath* as well as for *Conscience sake*. They are as much in *Subjection* to the *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*, as their *Subjects* are to *them*! And as they bear *his Name and Character* for the *Good of Mankind*, they have a glorious *may not to be afraid of his Power*, and that is, by *making a just and beneficent Use of their own*.

Heb. 6. 16.
—13.

Rom. 13. 5.

1 Tim. 6.
15.

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The Reason why Kings and Judges are *called Gods*, being thus *ascertain'd* from the *Signification* of this *Name*; the Labour wou'd be needless to search the *Old Testament*, and shew with what Frequency it is imparted to them. Twice it is in this Psalm, and four times in the Book of *Exodus*: and tho' *Judges* more strictly than *Kings* are call'd by this Name (as may appear from the Book of *Exodus*, where *Judges*, subordinate Magistrates, *then* as well as *now*, are always *Elohim* in the sacred Text) yet Kings being *supreme*, in St. Paul's and St. Peter's account, and *Judges* being *Governours* *sent by them, for the Punishment of Evil-doers, and for the Praise of them that do well*; as *They* are, likewise, under the *Religion* of an *Oath*, and are *specially* intrusted with the *Power of Life and Death*, without which no human Polity can hold up its head; *They*, sure, are *Gods*, in the *highest delegated Sense*, as having the *highest Trust* in *judging a People righteously*; and they illustriously assert themselves to be *Sons of the most High*, when they *religiously* and *stedfastly* *purpose* to govern well!

In this *communicated Sense* St. Paul allows that *there* *be Gods many and Lords many*, tho' he strikes all the *Heathen Deities* out of the *Scriptural List* of Gods.

And when he tells us that the *Man of Sin* will *exalt himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped*, he means only that he will exalt himself against all Kings and Magistracies, which, in the Language of the Scriptures, are *called Gods*.

For it is too low for the sacred Stile to express the supreme Deity by *πᾶν τὸ λεγόμενον Θεόν*, who is not *called*, but *acknowledg'd God*: and *Σέβασμα* is not the *Adoration* which is *offer'd to God*, but the *Honour* and *Regard*

Regard which is *due* to our *Earthly Magistrates*. Thus *Emperors* heretofore were stil'd Σεβαστοι, which the *Romans* translated into *Augustus*, and added to the *Names* Acts 25. of *theirs*. This *still* fore-runs the *Titles* of *Emperors* 21, 25. and *Kings*, and is us'd by our *Heralds* to set forth those of our *prime Nobility*: and well doth the *Apostle's* Character point out *the Man of Sin*, since he hath been too long known by his *usurp'd Authority* over *Christian Potentates*; and by *pretending to absolve Subjects* from their *Duty* and *Allegiance*, when their *Princes* stood in the *Way* of his *spiritual Tyranny*.

To take in our *Saviour's Judgement*, which ought to be *conclusive*, he not only pleads *Scripture*, but argues for the *inviolable Authority* of *that* which he *cites*, that *Kings* and *Judges* are *Gods* by *Divine Nomination*. He proves them to be *so* from the *Psalm* of my *Text*, John 10. 35. and affirms that it is a *Scripture which cannot be broken*; and altho' he was not allow'd to plead from it to his *own Title*, yet they cou'd not but grant the *Precedent* from which he pleaded.

And now, if we consider the *Godlike Qualities* and *Acts* which are to sustain the *Trust* placed in these *Earthly Gods*, we shall find that their *High Titles* were not given them for *nought*; but that the good *Magistrate* earns *all the Honours* which can be heap'd upon him.

In the *Divine Institution* of the *Regal-Office* which was promis'd 350 Years before *Israel had a King*, God prescribes that the *Book of the Law* shou'd be read *con-* Deut. 17. *tinually by him*, not only that *from thence* he might 19. learn the *best Arts of Government*; but that, by *standing in fear* of a *greater Majesty* than himself, his *Heart* shou'd not be *lifted up above his Brethren*. Verse 20.

Judges,

Judges, according to *Jethro's* Advice, were to be nobly qualify'd for an Office, which (he justly observ'd) was as *arduous* as it was *honourable*. They were to be able Men, such as fear'd God, Men of Truth, and hating Covetousness: and when God had appointed them at the Prayer of *Moses*, who, under Him, was the Prince and Leader of his People, He endued them with a Spirit equal to their Charge, that they might be enabled, thereby, to bear the Burden of the People.

Ex. 18. 21.

Numb. 11.

17.

And yet, tho' the Governing Spirit was so needful that it was inspir'd, it was no Abatement to their Power, but the Security and Ornament of it, that They, no more than the Subject, might do what was right in their own Eyes: for it was Glorious for the King, and Safe for the Judge, that they were within the Compass of a limited Commission, which they were not to transgress, on the Right-hand, or on the Left.

Deut. 17.

19.

Ex. 18. 16.

He shall read therein (saith God of his King) that he may—keep all the Words of this Law, and these Statutes to do them. When they have a matter (saith *Moses*) they come unto me, and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the Statutes of God and his Laws. And this (as *Cicero* tells us) is the very Constitution of all Regular Politicks, that the * Magistrate may prescribe what is right and useful, but still with this Restriction, that it be agreeable to the Laws: for as the Laws govern the Magistrate, so must the Magistrate the People; and this may be truly

* Magistratus hæc est Vis, ut præsit præscribatque recta & utilia, & conjuncta cum Legibus: ut enim Magistratibus leges, ita populo præsunt Magistratus: verèque dici potest Magistratum legem esse loquentem, legem autem mutum esse Magistratum. De Legibus. affirm'd,

the Vicegerents of GOD.

9

affirm'd, *that the Magistracy is a speaking Law, and the Law a silent Magistracy.*

Nor is there occasion for the Actings of an *Extraordinary Spirit*, when the Magistrate hath enough to employ his *natural and acquir'd Abilities* in the continual *Cares* of his *Administration*.

For consider him Ye, who *enjoy the Securities of Government*, as keeping the *Foundations of the Earth* in Psal. 82. 5. *their proper Course, and bearing up the Pillars of it!* — 75. 3. Look up to him Ye, who are in want of his manifold *Aid*, for he *defends the Poor and Fatherless, he sees that such as are in need and necessity have Right, and saves them from the hands of the Ungodly!* Reverence him Ye, who can look through the *Trappings of Power*, into the *Beauty, and Order, and Harmony* which is conserv'd by it; for he *puts on Righteousness that it may* Job 29. 14. *clothe him, his Judgement is as a Robe and Diadem!* Stand in *Awe of him* Ye, and tremble at his *Award*, who come before him as *Oppressors, or Criminals* of any sort, for he *breaks the Jaws of the Wicked; he breathes* — — 17. *Life into the Laws, by just, and mature, and discreet Execution; and he is not afraid of the Faces of Men,* Deut. 1. 17. *because the Judgement is God's!* Bless him all Ye, who know that the *Care of Religion* is the *chief part of Justice*; for the *Laws of God and Man* appoint him, to *crush the Blasphemer; to muzzle the Derider of Holy Mysteries; and to punish every Wickedness* which provokes *That God, by whom Kings reign and Princes* Prov. 8. 15. *decree Justice!*

Great is his *Opportunity and Glory*, to be the *Instrument of God*; to act, *in his stead, and under his Name*, while he exercises the *exact Discipline of Justice and Judgement*. Great is his *Virtue*, Great is his *Praise*,
C when

when he keeps up the *Venerable Impartiality* of his Office; and Every One is his *Client*, his *Child*, his *Ward*, the *Equity* of whose *Case* bespeaks his *Patronage*; Every One is his *Enemy*, and shall feel his hand, who *presumptuously*, or *subdolously* breaks through the Fences of Government! Above all! *Divine* is his *Character*, (for then, in the Truest and Best Sense he bears the *Name of God*) when he suffers not *That God* to be *daringly offended* who is the *Protector of Kings and States*; nor *That Providence* to be *insulted*, which keeps the *Magistrate in his Seat*; nor *Those Principles* to be *derided*, and *scoff'd out* of the World, which *Engage the Consciences of Men* in the *Reverence and Support of Government*!

This is *God's Deposit* in the whole and every part; and This is *Man's deposit*, as the *only universal Interest* to be *preserv'd* by *Those*, who *Worthily Govern* and *Judge* their People. And as, by This *Consciousness* of their *High Calling*, This *Consciousness* of the *Trust* re-*pos'd* in them by *God and Man*, they will shew themselves to be *Gods* in the very *Intention* of my Text; God will make good his *Promise* which the Psalmist hath asserted in the other part of it, *He will stand in the Congregation of such mighty ones, He will be a Judge among such Gods.*

And this brings me,

II. To consider the Assistance and Defence with which they are supported in their Attendance upon the Charge committed to their Trust.

2 Sam. 23.
3. For, if they *who Rule over Men*, by their Office, should be *Just*, *God*, who Ruleth over *them*, by his Nature,

the Vicegerents of G O D.

II

Nature, *cannot but be so*. And if the Justice of Those who are *in the Throne or upon the Bench*, consists in the Execution of Their *Capacious Charge*; the Justice of That *Almighty Sovereign* whose *Delegates* they are, consists in *supporting them with His Assistance and Defence*.

Assistance relates to the Administration of *their Office*; and *Defence* relates to their Maintenance and Safety *in it*. Did not the *Divine Assistance and Defence* unite in their *Favour*, the *Prince* and the *Judge* might be liable to *Dangers*, arising from the *Severities* which they are oblig'd to *execute*: but, as *God* is pleas'd to *instruct* and *arm them too*; and brings their People to *submit* to the *Penalties* of Government, when they will not be *influenc'd* by the Encouragements of it; *This both* makes their Office *Good and Profitable to Men*; and renders it (as it *ought to be*) *Safe and Honourable to Them-selves*.

Now the *Wise and Understanding Heart* is an *Assistance* so *extensive*, that *Solomon* pray'd for *nothing* 1 Kings 3. else to qualify him for the *whole Compass* of the *Royal* 9. *Care*! And as the *Text* assures us that *all Israel fear'd the King*, for they saw that the *Wisdom of God* was in him to do *Judgement*; so, where the *Supreme*, and his *Subordinates* are *renown'd* for *Wisdom*, the People, gladly, observe that the *Divine Signature* is upon them, and manifest a *Common Happiness* under their *Administration*. — 28.

By the *Divine Assistance* we do not always mean such a *superior Impulse*, as, darting upon the *Mind*, inspires the *Magistrate* to resolve the most *perplexing Difficulties*; but *this is intended*, that *God* hath *reveal'd* a full *Body of Instructions*

structions for his *continual use*, under which his *other Attainments* will appear with *great advantage*.

But let it be acknowledg'd that *God* hath *often conferr'd* upon his *Delegates* a *wonderful Penetration*, whereby they have *seen through* most intricate *Cases at once*; and came at a *right Decision* by *such Discoveries*, as were *entirely* out of the reach of *judicial Examination*.

1 Kin. 3.
25.

Thus *Solomon* determin'd to which *Mother* the living *Child* belong'd, by a *Judgement* which *seem'd Inhuman*, till it had forced out the *affectionate Truth*. And as *God is King over all the Earth*, and, every where, grants his *Assistance* where he *exercises* his *Dominion*, thus * *Ariopharnes* distinguish'd the true *Son* of the *Cimmerian King*, by his *refusing* to thrust his *Dart* into the *Corpse* of his *Father*; and † *Claudius* compell'd the *Mother* to *confess* her *Son*, by proposing a *Marriage* to her, which she *abhorr'd* as *incestuous*.

When the *Powers* of *Human Sagacity* thus *out-act* themselves, and *without* any *Precedent* perform *Wonders* in *Judicature*, which must not be *drawn* into *Precedents* any more; this ought to be *resolv'd* into a *superiour Operation*, *suited*, and yet *limited* to the *present Exigence*. And every *Magistrate* may *find* in the *careful discharge* of his *Office*, (and acknowledge that he *hath found*) the *ready help* of *God*, when all his *Reading* and *Experience* have been at a *plunge*, and nothing but a sort of *Inspiration* could *help him out*.

2 Cor. 9.
15.
Prov. 3. 5.

The unbelieving *Politicians* may *disdain all this*, and *resolve* it into a *true Knowledge of Business*, and an happy *Turn of Thought*! They may separate between *God*, and *these his unspeakable Gifts*, and *lean* as much as they please,

* *Diodorus Siculus*.

† *Suetonius*.

please, to their own Understanding; yet they shall find often, by the *Shortness*, and sometimes by the *Obliquity* of their *Decisions*, that their *Light*, without an *higher Beam*, is no more than *Darkness*; and none are so *blind* in their *Reasonings* or in their *Judgments*, as those who, *presumptuously*, shut it out.

A Magistrate who *doth not Rule in the Fear of God*, may, possibly, act a *laudable part* in Government, and obtain the Character of being, *generally wise and just*; it is pity that he should not *own the Fountain* from whence his *Abilities* flow, for surely that would not make him *less Wise and Uncorrupt*! In *one thing*, at least, he is deficient, that he consults not the *Glory of God*, (which is the *chief End* of Government) as well as the *common Good*; and the common Good is not so *likely* to prosper in his hand, as he fecludes *that superintending Care* which *always consults it*.

No! if it is the *Divine Prerogative* (and he claims it as his own) to *turn wise men backward, and to make* Isa. 44. 25. *their Knowledge foolish*; it must be his Prerogative to *give a large Heart, and strong Capacities*; to *prosper* 1 Kin. 4. 29. *those Studies* which Magistrates inure themselves to, in *Qualification* for their *Charge*; and to *appropriate their Experience*, be it never so *deep and wide*, to all the *Uses and Emergencies* of their *important Commission*.

As God (sometimes *extraordinarily*, if the Case so requires, and) always in the Course of their *weighty Trust*, he favours his *Vicegerents* with *proper Assistance*; in the manner, and by the *same Measures*, he *protects and defends them too*.

What are his *Holy Injunctions*, that we should *render* Rom. 13. 7. *them all, their Dues*! What are those Impressions of *fear, and Honour, and Reverence, and Obedience*, which He

Rom. 13.5. *He strikes upon the Conscience, and we, readily, receive!*
 What is that *Awe and Dread*, that *Gratitude and Love*
 with which we regard their *Persons*; that *sparkling*
 Joy, those *honest Ecstasies* which we express at their
 —7. *Presence among us!* What are those *Tributes and Customs*, those *Payments and Contributions*, which are appointed by God before they are granted by Man, but so many *Demonstrations* that, as their *Office* is of *Divine*
 —1. *Institution*, so their *Conservation* belongs to the *Almighty Care!* God wou'd never, *circumscriptively*, provide for their *State and Dignity*, nor for their *sacred Tenure* in the *Consciences of Mankind*, were it not that *He has interested his Providence in their Protection*; and that he had therefore interested it, because they are His
 —6. *Ministers.*

Nor is it only, that by *plain and repeated Commands*, God makes *Religion the chief Instrument* in fencing them round, and guarding their *Safety*; (Oh, may they stand up for that *Religion* which is so tender of them; may they curb in the *Enemies of God and Godliness*, who will always be found to be *their Enemies* at the last though they flatter that *Power which they wou'd gladly destroy!*) but when those *Obligations* are either *forgot or over-born*, and the *People imagine vain and destructive things*; then *His High Arm defends* what His *Providence cover'd* before, and His *over-ruling Power baffles* their pernicious *Projects!*

Pf. 2. 1.

Thus *Treasons* are *whisper'd* under an *idle Confidence* and *Horror*, or the *false Friend, carries the Voice*, and
 Eccl. 10. 20. *tells the matter!* Thus *Conspiracies* are hatch'd in *secrecy* and the *timorous Cabal, distrustful and distrusted*, at length *betray each other!* But if, for the *Sins of a People*, they are permitted to prevail, and they stretch forth their
 2 Sam. 1. 14. *Hands*

Hands in pursuit of *impious Change*, to *subvert the Laws*, and to *destroy God's Anointed over them*; their own feelings will join with *past Experiences* to shew, that the *terrible Ruin terminates upon themselves*, and that such *detestable Sins* become their own exemplary and merited Punishment !

In a word; it is a true and a noble Sentiment, that subjects can expect *nothing* from those who *Rule over them*, which *their Rulers* may not expect from a *Just and Equal God*. And as under *their Wings* we expect to be *safe*, and plead a *Right* to be *protected by them* in all our *Properties*; so *They* have the *same Right* to stand with *their Almighty Guardian*, who, in Justice to his own *Character* and *Charge* will *protect and defend* them.

I am now come to my last Head of Discourse, wherein,

III. We are to consider the Returns which Religion and Gratitude prescribe, for the Benefits flowing from their Administration.

I have out-run myself in the Returns to Government which Religion prescribes, unless it be, that we think ourselves *obliged to obey* what God commands. Perhaps we *may not*: for we seem to be under the *strong but Delusion*, that it is as *foolish* to own the *Obligations* the *Principles of Faith and Godliness*.

Now, alas, *Subjection* and *Protection* must be *mutual*, and go hand-in-hand ! and so they *always have*, so they *always will*, where God hath *any thing* to do with Government, or Government hath *any thing* to do with God.

It is strange that *That* shou'd be settled as a *Political Principle*, which will not be allow'd to have any Force as a *Principle of Religion*; that *mutual Compact* shou'd be esteem'd such a *wonderful Security*, taken by itself as if it were *less binding* when God is a Judge of it and a Witness to it.

To what End doth God stand in the Congregation of the Mighty, and judge among the Gods, but that he may observe upon their Administration, for the sake of Those whom they Rule and Judge? Why are they invested with one of His most *Lovely Names*, but that, as they are called Gods, they shou'd be to their People as Gods. What is God to Them, and Us, and All, but Gracious and Benign; Watching over us; Provident for us; Protecting us when we do not think that we want protection; and Rescuing us when we are sure that we are in danger? And how shou'd this charm us into Subjection, when the Idea descends with the Name, the Capacity with the Power; and the Magistrate to the utmost of his Compass is oblig'd to be thus like God?

And here let it rest:—and neither disputing the Supposition, nor debating what we shou'd do if it were violated by our Superiors, let us abbreviate the Divine, and (I may say) Gracious Precepts, which require that, for our own sakes, we shou'd be willing and obedient.

If. 1. 9.

Rom. 13. 1. We are, Every Soul of us, to be subject unto the higher Powers, as to the Ordinance of God: and although

1 Pet. 2.

13.

they may be constituted by the Ordinance of Man, yet we must submit ourselves to them for the Lord's sake.

We must be subject in consideration of the End for which they were ordain'd by God, or set over us by ourselves: they are God's Ministers to us for Good; under them

Rom. 13.

4.

we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives; and they are not

not a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil. We must be subject, in dread of the Power which they are invested Rom. 17. 3. with; Power which we neither did nor could convey, for it comes to them from the hand of God: they bear the Sword; they bear it not in vain; they are the Ministers — 4. of God; His Revengers to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil. We must be subject still for Conscience sake: — 5. not only that so we may have a good Conscience toward God (which is a deep Obligation upon us all, and he will surely require it of us) but διὰ τῆς συνείδησιν, out of the pure Judgement of the Mind; which cannot but confess, if it thinks as it ought, that we are indebted for inestimable Blessings to the Vigilance of Government.

And this introduces the other Principle, Gratitude: a Principle which may mistake, but cannot be debauch'd; a Principle which is ever officious in owning the Benefactor, and works wonders of Love and Service where its Power is commensurate.

The Title of Benefactor is as pleasing a Compliment as Subjects can bestow upon their common Guardians. All Emperors, Greek and Roman, delighted in it: and many, as our Saviour intimates, fondly affected it, though Luke 22. they did not deserve it! There can be but one Appellation ^{25.} above it, and That is Father! And as * Seneca instructs us in the Duty of that Character, that Fathers of their Country are They who exercise a Parental Power over it; † Cicero assigns to All who, by any kind of Service

* Patrem Patriæ appellavimus, ut scirent datam sibi Potestatem patriam; quæ est Temperatissima, liberis Consulens, &c. Sen.

† Omnibus qui Patriam conservarint, adjuverint, auxerint, certum esse in Cælo & definitum Locum, ubi Beati ævo sempiterno fruuntur.

to their Country; *deserve That Character, Distinguish'd Mansions, Peculiar Rewards in Heaven.*

And, truly, there is no Proportion between what we do, or *can do*, for Those who *Rule over us*, and, what, while they are *incumbent* upon the *Cares* of Government, they are *continually doing*, and *anxiously meditating* for us! For the Blessings which every *private Man* is repaid with, by a *Just, and Regular, and Religious Administration*, will ever be Greater than all that we can repay, to *maintain the Authority*, or to *keep up the Majesty* of Government.

Since This is the *Universal Case* between Governours and Their People, that *Both* have their *Duties charg'd* upon them, and *Both* have their *Advantages* resulting from their *Duty*; since *Christian Governours* are *Taught by God*, what are the *diversify'd Cares* upon which they are to *attend*, and what the *weighty Reasons* for which they are *called Gods*; since our *Sovereign* is at the Head of the *Best Christian Government*, and our *Judges* have the *Best of human Laws* to *interpret*, and to *put in force*; since the *Present Holy Action* is a sort of *Recapitulation* upon the *Higher and Lower Orders*, that we shou'd *All*, in our *several Stations*, *recognize* our *Duty*: Let us consider what it is to be, not only *Christian*, but *English Subjects*; and what *Obedience*, both in *Piety* and *Gratitude*, is due to Those whom *God hath appointed over us*. *As we fear God*, let us *honour the King*; and shew, by the *Sincerity*, and *Chearfulness* of our *Obedience*, that we *Honour the King* as Those who *truly Fear God*! Let us not *heighten* the *present Difficulties*, nor *discourage* the *Royal Cares*, by *Murmurings*, *Complainings*, or *Suspensions* of any sort: but wait for *Events* which may *Exceed* our *Expectations*, and

and turn our *Discontents* into *Admiration* and *Praise* !
 Let us remember that the *Apostle* joins the *Unthankful* 2 Tim. 3. 2.
 together with the *Unholy* ; and that we cannot create
Disaffections against the *Administration*, but we must
 be *disaffected* against our *Country*, and against *Our-*
selves.

Give me Leave to add a few Words of Application,
 and then I shall have done.

Nothing more illustrates the *Wisdom* of any State than
 the *Excellence* of *Those Laws* by which it is *Govern'd*.
 This (saith *Moses*) is your *Wisdom* and your *Under-* Deut. 4. 6.
standing in the sight of the Nations, which shall hear
 all these *Statutes*, and say, Surely this *Great Nation*
 is a *Wise and Understanding People* ! This *Wisdom*
 our *Legislature* hath always shown, (and lately demon-
 strated, to their own *Glory* and the publick *Benefit*) in
 compiling, for every rising *Emergence*, most *wholesome*
Laws; and no *Kingdom* can compare with ours, for a
Succession of learned and able *Judges*, who have always
 done as much *Honour to our Laws*, as our *Laws* have
 justly honour'd our *Nation*.

In the *Name* and by the *Grace of God*, let the *Di-*
vine Laws join their *Sanctions* with the *Laws* of the
Land ! For then every *Soul* in and under *Authority*,
 will know their *Duties* and have their *Dues* ; and our
Judges will be *instructed* (as *David's Worthies* were) 1 Chron. 26.
 in all the *Business of the Lord*, and in the *Service of* 30.
 their *King*, and *Country* !

We have another *blessed Advantage* and we may
 justly glory in it (not from our *Lives*, for we are a *sinful*
People, but from the *Primitive Orthodoxy* of our *Faith*

and *Worship*) and that is, that there is no Nation so
 Deut. 4. 7. Great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord
 our God is, in all things that we call upon him for.
 On account of This Blessed Advantage, and that (though
 we are most unworthy) He might secure it to us, God
 hath been exceedingly gracious to This Land, and com-
 Pfal. 44. 4. manded more Deliverances for us, than any other Na-
 tion upon Earth can recount or glory in!

Let us make use of This Privilege, at least in the
 Praying Part, and beseech our God, who is so Nigh
 unto us, that He would protect our Sovereign, and make
 him Glorious, in his Person, in his Actions, in his Re-
 lations, and in his People! That he would assist our
 Magistrates in the Execution of Justice, and in the
 maintenance of Truth; Inspiring them to deal coura-
 geously, and being ever with them! And that he would
 make us all such obedient Sons of Government, and
 That, from the Best of Principles, for Conscience-sake;
 that We, together with the Fathers of our Country,
 may be remov'd from the Care of His Providence, into
 the Glory of His Presence; and Live and Reign with
 Him, and with the Lamb for ever!



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